

privacy concerns should be assured with any voucher system.

● **Solvency Concerns.** The solvency concerns raised in the NPRM are legitimate with respect to new carriers that could emerge lured by the prospect of significant universal service funding and then disappear leaving customers in the lurch. By way of analogy, much about insolvency prevention and oversight can be learned from the experience of insurance regulators and legislators.<sup>12</sup>

**Principle Six: Access to Advanced Telecommunications Services for Schools, Libraries and Health Care Facilities.**

It is important that the new law not become a vehicle for having outmoded equipment dumped on such institutions in the name of advancing the information highway. Likewise, a realistic assessment reveals that in many schools there is not the needed infrastructure (electric wiring, phone lines, personnel, etc.) for some of the theoretical "computer-at-every-desk" promises of the legislation's supporters. Schools and libraries in low-income neighborhoods and those heavily populated by racial minorities would be particularly vulnerable.<sup>13</sup>

**Principle Seven: Additional Principles Appropriate for the Protection of the Public Interest, Convenience, and Necessity Consistent with the Act.**

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<sup>12</sup> See "Wishful Thinking, A World View of Insurance Solvency Regulation", Report of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Energy And Commerce (October 1994) and GAO reports cited therein.

<sup>13</sup> See Comments of the Office of Communications of the United Church of Christ, before the NTIA, Department of Commerce, Docket No. 94095-4235, December 14, 1994.

## **Appendix A**

● **The Michigan Consumer Federation** is a coalition of thirty organizations representing over 40,000 Michigan residents. It was founded in 1991 to advocate for the interests of Michigan consumers in the shaping of public policy on issues before the Michigan Legislature, state executive branch agencies, the United States Congress, and federal regulatory bodies.

● **The Oregon Citizens Utility Board (CUB)** is a statewide nonprofit membership organization established under Oregon law to represent the interest of utility consumers before legislative, judicial and administrative bodies. CUB currently includes 10,000 residential, small business and farm members.

● **The Massachusetts Consumer Association**, founded in 1963, is a statewide membership organization representing the consumer interest, with a particular emphasis on telecommunications policy.

● **Chicago Media Watch** is a nonprofit educational and advocacy group committed to education and the furtherance of democracy through a media presence that represents the people.

● **Environmental Media Association** Founded in 1989, EMA's goal is to mobilize the entertainment industry in a global effort to educate people about environmental problems and to inspire them to take action on those problems.

● **The Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press** is a nonprofit organization founded in 1972 to engage in education, research, advocacy and publishing related to the principles of Freedom of the Press and the inclusion of all in democratic institutions.

● **The Center for Media Literacy**, founded in 1989, the CML is a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to a new view of literacy for the 21st century. With an international membership of 2,000, the Center is the largest producer and distributor of media literacy and teaching materials in North America.

● **The Greater Washington Area Chapter of The Cultural Environment Movement** is a coalition of organizations and individuals representing a wide range of social and cultural interests but sharing common goals of freedom, fairness, diversity and democracy in cultural policy-making.

● **The Columbus Center for Media Education** is a community-based group of concerned educators, business leaders, health care professionals and parents dedicated to increasing general awareness and understanding of the impact of television violence.

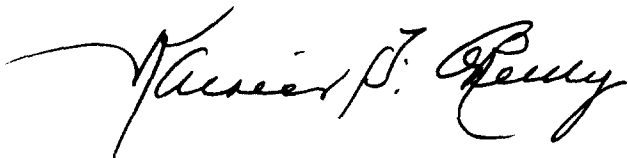
● **Miles River Press**

● **Independent Administration of USF** The Universal Service Fund should be administered by an independent, third-party that is not controlled by any carrier. The fund administrator should not be allowed to function essentially as a trade association for the local telephone companies as is presently the case with the administrative agency (NECA) that controls the Universal Service funding transfers, including the Lifeline and Link Up programs.

### **Conclusion**

Supporters of the legislation assured the public that it would encourage competitors to go toe-to-toe in the emerging world of telecommunications and that consumers would be the winners. To date there is disturbing evidence that instead the competitors are walking off arm-in-arm. Unless regulators soon protect the public interest, the new law will result in cartels, not competition, with the economic and political power of the local phone companies still further entrenched. Both as local phone customers and citizens, households and small business would be the losers.

Respectfully Submitted,



Kathleen F. O'Reilly  
Attorney at Law

April 19, 1996

414 A Street, Southeast  
Washington, D.C. 20003  
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## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540

January 18, 1984

The Honorable Mark S. Fowler  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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On behalf of myself and 20 of my colleagues in the United States Senate, I am pleased to submit today a letter to the Federal Communications Commission which respectfully requests that the Commission consider revising its "access charge orders."

During the past two months, Congress has been in recess and Senators have had an extended opportunity to visit with their constituents about matters of concern. Not surprisingly, this Senator has found that there is much confusion about the present and future condition of our telecommunications industries. There is in some quarters concern, albeit apparently unfounded, that the cost of basic telephone service will double or even triple in the immediate future. While some might suggest that this letter comes at a late hour, given that the scheduled effective date of the "access charge orders" is barely seventy days away and that we are asking the Commission to modify its order well in advance of that date, the importance of this issue from an overall national policy perspective motivates us to utilize this opportunity to communicate to the Commission the views of our constituents regarding this matter.

We are confident that the Commission will properly balance our views and the views of our constituents regarding telecommunications policy with those of the hundreds of others that have corresponded with the Commission on these matters. I would stress that in no way is it intended that this letter be clandestine, nor do we by any stretch of the imagination have the intention of unduly influencing the Commission. I might briefly point out that we raise no new facts that have not been raised countless times before. Further, no one has been deprived of the opportunity to be heard on this issue, and indeed we have sent a copy of our letter to each and every person that has communicated with the Commission regarding its "access charge orders." We are not attempting to expedite the process in order to deprive anyone of the opportunity to make his feelings known on this issue. Instead, we ask the Commission to modify its order so that no access charges are

The Honorable Mark S. Fowler  
January 18, 1984  
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imposed during 1984. Implicit in this suggestion is the recognition that others with an interest will have ample opportunity to communicate further with the Commission on this issue.

Given the uncertainty and confusion that currently exists within the telecommunications field, it seems to me a particularly inopportune time for Congress to consider major telephone legislation. It may be that members of Congress feel they are in a much better position to resist the temptation to "do something" about this uncertainty if the Commission modifies its "access charge orders."

In the final analysis, I am certain that all members of Congress and the American people desire a telecommunications policy that insures affordable universal telephone service not only in 1984, but throughout the rest of this decade and for decades to come. I look forward to having further dialogue with the Commission on these and other important telecommunications issues in the future.

Sincerely yours,



BOB DOLE  
United States Senate

BD:jpe

### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Kathleen F. O'Reilly, hereby certify that a true and correct copy of the foregoing, "Comments of the Oregon Citizens Utility Board, et al, was mailed this 19th day of April, 1996 to the following, an \* designating service by hand:

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